

EVENING CAPITAL JOURNAL

PUBLISHED—
EVERY EVENING EXCEPT SUNDAY.
BY THE—

Capital Journal Publishing Company
[INCORPORATED.]

Office, 112 Court Street, Opera House Block.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

DAILY

One year, by mail \$5.00
Six months, by mail \$3.00
Three months by mail \$1.50
Per week delivered by carrier 15¢

WEEKLY

One year \$2.00
Six months \$1.00
Three months \$0.50

No Portion of this paper is authorized to receive advertisements.

Entered as second-class matter at the Salem, Oregon, Post Office, March 8, 1888.

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 1888.

REPUBLICAN STATE TICKET.

Congressional,
HENRY HERMANN,
representative from
W. T. LEWIS,
Provisional Elector,
ROBERT MULLEN,
Wm. KELPS,
C. W. FULTON,
Prosecuting Attorney Third Dist.,
H. H. REWITT.

MARION COUNTY REPUBLICAN TICKET.

STATE LEGISLATORS,
J. B. WALDO, Madison
T. T. GUTH, Stayton
J. Q. TILSON, Salem
R. LIVMAN, Newberg
WM. ADAMS, Marion, South Salem
COMMITTEE
R. M. CHODOR, Salem
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A. F. BLACKERWELL, Silverton
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WILLIAM HARRINGTON,
D. W. YOUNG, Sherwood
EDWARD
W. J. GLASS, West Salem
EDWARD
Dr. D. C. ELLIOTT, Woodburn

LOCAL OPTION SOPHISTRY.

An esteemed subscriber in Polk county sends us a copy of the Lever, a prohibition organ, published in Chicago, which marks article listing the above title. Whether he thinks the reading of this article would be profitable to this editor, or whether he desires to involve us in a controversy on this issue, to the utter confusion of our logic, is left to conjecture. To gratify him and his brother prohibitionists, however, we will cursorily glance through this "local option" argument, just to see what sophistry is exposed. We find such sayings as these:

A FOOL MODE OF ATTACK.

The following is from the Yaquina Post:

St. John while at Salem visited the insane asylum, where he was at once recognized as a friend and brother, and the "chromes" were so insistent that he remain with them as chief that he was forced to acknowledge himself a common fraud, working his racket for British or democratic gold!

The Post is a republican sheet, and this kind of talk is probably designed to aid that party at the polls. But we doubt whether suckers can be caught by such bait. St. John has shown his power as a political debater in this state, and the men who have joined his ranks are of more than average intelligence and manifestly determined in purpose.

They are not to be won back by such mud throwing as the above, and republican readers cannot be best pleased at such a display of malice and ill breeding. If Bro. Van Cleve has any argument to produce to show that the prohibitionists are going the wrong way, now is a good time for him to make his best showing; for he may be assured that abuse and slang are taken as a lack of reason, and such foul weapons are most harmful to those who wield them.

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It will be noticed that the spirit that pervades the above declarations is dictatorial; an absolute power is implied to impose law and a people who meekly obey. But such does not accord with the political institutions of this country. The lawmaker mistakes his vocation who frames laws that are not sustained by public sentiment. He cannot go in advance of his fellow citizens; he must not impose his sense of right upon a people who fail to see things as he does. His election to office gives him no special illumination, and if he wraps the robes of Lycurgus around him, or, in other words, puts on airs, the nonsense will be taken out of him at the next election. The American people reserve to themselves the right to do their own thinking; and those persons whom they select to make and enforce their laws, must remember that the sovereignty rests with those who invest them with power.

Then what does the Lever writer mean by his first saying quoted above? Who is to prevent the people legalizing "the crime of liquor selling"? To whom is "the logical concession made"? What "pernicious principle"? The use of intoxicants has been indulged by the human family from the days of Noah, and through all the ages the practice was assumed to be as cor-

rect and indispensable as the use of food. Our national constitution was framed when wine drinking was not regarded as deleterious, and the penal codes of most of the states were made when public sentiment was not aroused to the evils of strong drink. Hence no powers were embodied to deal with the rum traffic; nor can the most liberal construction of our state charters, while unamended, furnish authorization to our law officers to abolish or restrict. The power has to be given at a public election, and public opinion needs to be educated and enlightened before the vote is taken.

"The right to prohibit," says our writer, "does not imply the right to legalize or license."³ Where does he find the right to prohibit but in the expressed will of the people? The same sovereign power that orders the abolition of the rum trade can order its restriction by any means chosen. One exercise of power is not implied in the other, but each exists in concrete shape when formulated into a law, approved by the courts as valid and sustained by the will of the people.

If this statement of the case is correct, and we believe it will be admitted to all these prohibition writers and lecturers are guilty of begging the question who assume that the liquor traffic is condemned by some sovereign power, whose existence is not denied, but whose fiat is irresistible. If the people of a state are not willing and ready to impose prohibition on themselves, to restrain the use of strong liquor by a high license is painless something. If there are some facilities in that state, (towns or counties) which favor the abolition of the rum traffic, give them the option to prohibit; such a law relieves them of the duty. The lever says the effect of local option is to prohibit where prohibition is least needed; but consider will admit that prohibition is everywhere needed, and its enforcement in one locality is an entering wedge to its adoption in other places.

This loose and indeterminate talk of an overruling sovereign power, whose existence cannot be denied, and this denial to the people of "a right to legalize," which no power can hinder, spring from a confusion of ideas. In this country the people are sovereign, and until they get ready to interdict the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks by a national law, moral reformers must be content to gain their end by zigzagging, as Grant won his way into Petersburg. The soldier who despises the day of small things may make a crossing platform orator, but he will not win in the fight.

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